



CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

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City of Falls Church Suffers Loss in Death of City Manager

FALLS CHURCH, VA. – On the evening of Tuesday, July 25, 2006, Falls Church City Manager Daniel E. McKeever, 57, died due to complications from melanoma. McKeever served as City Manager since his appointment by Council in June 2000 after a competitive selection process. He was the longest serving Falls Church City Manager since Harry Wells who retired in 1983. He is survived by his wife, Cynthia Gannaway.

“Dan has been the guiding hand in the City for the past six years,” said Mayor Robin S. Gardner. “His ability to work with citizens, City organizations, and regional organizations was inspirational. He has been the steady force that allowed Council to deal with the issues that came before us. Falls Church is a better city because of Dan. He will be truly missed, not just as an outstanding City Manager, but as a friend.”

“We've lost a wonderful human being and a gifted leader. The City of Falls Church has flourished with his management and our City will remain strong because of his vision,” said Vice Mayor M.R. Lindy Hockenberry.

McKeever was known for his focus on team management, placing a high value on City staff and inspiring excellence from all who worked for him. During his six years with the City, McKeever held annual meetings with all employees to keep them informed and solicit input on how to improve efficiency, he appointed a task force that revised the employees' performance evaluation system to make it more consistent for all employees, and streamlined the City's personnel policies.

“Dan McKeever was a tremendous individual -- a very caring and conscientious human being I'm proud to have called a friend. He was professional in every sense of the word and our City has been very well served by a truly capable and outstanding individual,” said former Mayor Daniel E. Gardner.

McKeever strongly believed in preserving the City's unique village community while working towards long-term sustainability. He was committed to improving efficiency between general government and school operations. He was an advocate of affordable housing and played an integral role in the City's achievements in this arena. Under McKeever's leadership, the City realized an unprecedented period of economic growth and private investment. Completed or under construction since 2004 are mixed-use development projects that will bring about \$336 million in taxable real estate value to the City of Falls Church and will strengthen and diversify the City's tax base. After decades of discussion, McKeever guided the City toward implementation of a City Center project that will change the face and focus of the City's core commercial area and further brighten its economic future.

He believed in reinvesting in public facilities and enhancing public access to information. He initiated streetscape enhancements to Broad Street, worked closely with the City Council to strengthen the City's Water Fund, and oversaw an aggressive Capital Improvements Program for the water distribution system. He pushed to enhance the building permits process and improve public accessibility to the information.

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He was a strong supporter of public safety and reorganized the City's Public Safety Division to include police, fire, fire marshal, and inspections. He ensured that the Police Department obtained Computer Aided Dispatch/Records Management Systems, which is one of the most advanced in the Commonwealth. He supported Emergency Management throughout the entire City government and directed the City's establishment of an Emergency Operations Center.

"Dan McKeever was a great mentor and friend. His leadership over the past years, and more recently the manner in which he battled cancer -- with openness, spirit, and courage -- are an inspiration for all who worked with him. We will miss him profoundly, and keep him in our hearts and minds as we carry forward the work of the City," said Acting City Manager Wyatt Shields.

A native of Pittsburgh, Pa., McKeever graduated from East Tennessee State University with a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology and received his Masters Degree in Urban Affairs from Virginia Tech. He began his municipal career with the Roanoke, Va. Police Department as a patrol officer. During his tenure with the Roanoke Police Department, he worked in a variety of capacities including patrol, training, criminal investigations, and attained the rank of Lieutenant in 1981. In December 1982, he was named the Chief of Police of Pulaski, Va. He served in that capacity until July 1983 when he was named Interim Town Manager. Later that year he was appointed Town Manager. In July 1989, McKeever was named City Manager of Laconia, N.H. where he served until joining the City in June 2000.

"The essence of Dan was that he had it all -- he was personable, tough, and smart. This is a terrible loss for the City and his friends," said former Vice Mayor Marty Meserve.

City flags have been lowered to half-staff in remembrance of McKeever upon decree from the Mayor.

"In my opinion, Dan was the most experienced, professional City Manager the City has had. He was always well prepared and his biweekly oral reports to the City Council were the best I recall hearing over the past 45 years. Before and during his illness he was a courteous man, energetic, responsive, and a thoroughly splendid person. He will be missed by many in our community, and I send deepest sympathies to his lovely wife," said long-time City resident Lou Olom.

The City's government will continue to operate under the management of Wyatt Shields, 37, who was named Acting City Manager by the Falls Church City Council on Monday, July 24, 2006. Shields was hired as Assistant City Manager by McKeever in August 2003.

Information regarding memorial services and arrangements will be provided as it becomes available. Those interested in sending cards or well wishes should direct them to the Office of the City Manager, 300 Park Avenue, Falls Church, VA 22046.

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Note: A photo of Daniel McKeever is attached. Photo Credit: City of Falls Church.